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ORLEANS DA FULL JFK

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RED COMET LAUNCHES DEATH PROBE

Mysterious Trips Cost Large Sums

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The Orleans Parish district attorney's office has launched an intensive investigation into the circumstances surrounding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The States-Item has learned that the DA's office is pouring out-of-the-ordinary sums of money into a probe of a possible assassination plot.

Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison refused to confirm or deny the existence of such an investigation or to discuss information received by the States-Item.

Several weeks ago, however, First Asst. Dist. Atty. Charles Ray Ward confirmed that such an investigation was in progress. He said at the time that he did not have much hope that the investigation would uncover any new information, but stressed that even the most routine leads must be checked out in a matter as important as a presidential murder.

(The information for this story was compiled by States-Item staff writers Jack Dempsey, Rosemary James and David Snyder.)

SINCE THE EARLY CONVERSATION WITH WARD, the investigation apparently has picked up momentum.

Trial assistants and investigators assigned to the DA have spent more than $8,000 on unexplained travel and "investigative expenses" in the period since Nov. 25, 1966.

Most of this money was spent in connection with trips to Dallas, Houston, Miami, Washington, San Francisco and Angola, and most of it was spent during January.

The only explanation given on records of the City Finance Department and Criminal District Court is that these sums of money were spent for a "special investigation by the district attorney."

A check of records revealed that these are not run-of-the-mill investigative expenses. Similar large sums were not spent in the same months of the two previous years.

THE POSSIBILITY OF A WELL-ORGANIZED assassination plot in which New Orleans and New Orleans residents were somehow directly involved is said to be at the center of the investigation.

The Warren Report, issued following a federal investigation into President Kennedy's death, stated there was no evidence to indicate the existence of a plot, that Mr. Kennedy's death came about as the sole result of the thoughts and actions of one man—Lee Harvey Oswald.

The local investigation, which began prior to the death of Jack Ruby, slayer of Oswald, is believed to have started with a routine check of information supplied to the district attorney's office by a New Orleans private detective.

The detective reportedly gave the district attorney a list of names of people who should be questioned.

Since that time the States-Item has uncovered several facts, including the unexplained expenditures, which indicate the investigation is more than a routine check.

These facts are as follows:

—A MAN WHO WAS ARRESTED IN NEW ORLEANS and booked as a fugitive from Texas Nov. 26, 1963, just four days after Kennedy's murder, was kept under surveillance for the district attorney for a 24-hour period last month. The man was to appear before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury in January. It is not known whether he subsequently appeared before the jury or gave the district attorney a statement.

—a 26-year-old Cuban man serving a nine-year sentence for a burglary committed in 1964 in New Orleans, has been transferred from Angola State Penitentiary to Parish Prison by the DA's office.

He formerly lived at 5008 Magazine, just a block from the last New Orleans address of Oswald, 4907 Magazine. He is reported to have known Oswald.

—A second Cuban with a Miami address was paid money by the DA's office for "investigative expense" in January.

OSWALD WAS A PRO-CASTRO AGITATOR while in New Orleans the summer before President Kennedy's death and claimed he represented the pro-Castro "Fair Play for Cuba" movement. Oswald also was involved in a scuffle here with

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anti-Castro Cubans about the same time. They claimed he was trying to "infiltrate" their organization.

—A number of people have given statements to the DA's office in connection with this investigation.

Reports that members of Garrison's staff have traveled to a number of places outside the continental United States in connection with this investigation have not been confirmed by expense records.

Other expenses for the "special investigation" are as follows:

Nov. 25, 1966: $993, Louis Ivon, trip to San Francisco.
Dec. 2; $64.90 John Volz, expenses on trip to Miami.
Dec. 15; $500, John Volz, investigative expenses.
Dec. 28; $425.60, travel to Chicago.
Dec. 29; $605.99, travel to Cincinnati.
Jan. 4, 1967: $175.03 James Alcock, trip to Houston.
Jan. 4; $821, Detectives Kent Simms, Cliency Navarre and Charles Jonau, trip to Miami.
Jan. 5; $364.75, Thomas Duffy, trip to Miami.
Jan. 6; $427, Lester Otillio, trip to Miami.
Jan. 12; $133, John P. Volz, trip to Dallas.
Jan. 12; $131.05, Southern Research Company (private detectives), expenses.
Jan. 13; $114.90, trip to Laurel, Miss.
Jan. 18; $200, pay Frank Meloche for expenses of returning Detectives Doug Ward and Lester Otillio to New

Orleans from Miami.

Jan. 18; $41.25, Airtaxi, Inc., Belle Chasse, for plane charter.

Jan. 19; $160, James Alcock for trip to Miami and New York.

Jan. 19; $203, Louis Ivon, trip to Dallas and Washington.

Jan. 19; $500, Louis Ivon investigative expenses.

Jan. 20; $596, Bernardo Torres of Miami, investigative expense.

Jan. 20; $25, Louis Ivon, investigative expense.

Jan. 20; $9.14, Alvin Oser, trip to Slidell.

Jan. 23; $200, pay to Frank Meloche for additional expenses for Doug Ward and Lester Otillio in Miami.

Jan. 27; $17.80, Lynn Loisel and Charles Jonau, trip to Angola.

Jan. 27; $14.37, Fenner Seddgebeer, reimbursement for expenses over advance for Miami trip.

Jan. 28; $582, Fenner Sedgebeer, trip to Miami.

Jan. 28; $312, James Alcock and Louis Ivon, trip to Miami.

Jan. 31; $22.80, Clem Niedermier and Lynn Loisell, trip to Miami.

Feb. 2; $55.50, Andrew J. Schambra, investigative expense.

Feb. 2; $206.30, John Volz, trip to Dallas.

Feb. 8; $101.01, Russell W. Buckholt Jr., Florida Parole and Probation Commission, for travel to New Orleans.

Feb. 9; $100, Louis Ivon, investigative expense.

Feb. 13; $101.01, Russell W. Buckholt Jr., travel from Miami to New Orleans.

In addition to these expenses, court records show that former assistant DA Frank Klein was paid $345 for "special counsel" for a "special investigation" by DA's office.